

Mother Preaches a Sermon.



**MORNING SERMON
At YOUNG CHURCH, WINNIPEG.**

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MOTHER PREACHES A SERMON

To absent ones our thoughts go out wherever we may be —
Not a day goes by without some tender memory.
No matter where our steps may lead, or what our lips may say
The heart remembers; keeping faith with loved ones far away.

And sometimes in the busy hours, or in a crowded place —
There comes the fleeting vision of a dear remembered face.
A passing word may strike a cord on Memory's golden strings —
And wake the echoing moan of the unforget-tan things.

Here in Young Church to-day we visualize our girls and boys afar and abroad who will be thinking very tenderly and lovingly of mothers and fathers and home on this Mother's Day. We remember them warmly in our hearts. To-day we are "keeping faith with the loved ones far away." I am glad that a day is specially set apart for remembering all mothers too. With reverent thankfulness we approach the day so dedicated; for every day is enriched and every life is given new quality by the sublime fact of motherhood.

What a beautiful and inspiring story the mothers of the world have written, the story of loyalty and devotion, of service and sacrifice, the story of imparting the creative urge of life, its upreaching quality, and its outreaching spirit. Behind the great characters of history whose lives have brought ben-ection to mankind stands the vast unseen army of noble mothers who inspired their lives and followed them in faith and hope and love and earnest prayers, through life. It has been her glory to make and consecrate the home, and to guide her heaven-born children into all that is best and highest. The task of motherhood is the highest and holiest and most important sphere in the world's life.

No boy or girl can ever quite forget the truth and love and beauty unfolded in a mother's life. There it stands like a lovely work of art to be admired. There it stands as a certain guide-post to challenge us to honor and devotion.

"Yet have I looked into my mother's eyes,
And seen the light that never was on sea
Or land, the light of love, pure love and true,
And on that love I bet my life."

A boy who afterward became Governor of Massachusetts, once came near being drowned. The boat in which he was sailing, capsized, and he had to swim nearly a mile, but finally reached the shore in safety. When he went home and told his mother of his thrilling experience, she asked him how he managed to hold out so long, and his reply was, "I just thought of you, mother, and kept on swimming." How many boys and girls, men and women, immersed in life's wide sea, have been inspired and strengthened by the thought of mother, to keep on swimming.

Thomas A. Edison, the great wonder-wizard of his generation, confessed, "I did not have my mother long, but she cast an influence over me which has lasted all my life. The good effects of her early training I can never lose. If it had not been for her appreciation and her faith in me at a critical time in my experience, I should never have become an inventor." Archer Wallace in "Mothers of great Men," has many a story of men who became great pillars of civilization because, in the face of terrific currents of difficulty, they were inspired by noble mothers "To keep on swimming." There was Benjamin West who confessed that it was his mother's encouraging kiss that made him a painter, Booker T. Washington, whose mother set a vision in the soul of a black slave boy, that could never fade, Sir James Barrie, who borrowed from Margaret Ogilvy the inspiration for his wonderful literary

career, and gave to the world the loveliest tribute to a mother, in all literature.

"A builder builded a temple,
He wrought it with grace and skill;
Pillars and groins and arches
All fashioned to work his will.
And men said as they saw its beauty,
'It never shall know decay,
Great is thy skill, O builder!
Thy fame shall endure for aye.'

A mother builded a temple
With infinite loving care,
Planning each arch with patience,
Laying each stone with prayer.
None praised her unceasing efforts,
None knew of her wondrous plan,
For the temple the mother builded
Was unseen by the eye of man.

None is the builder's temple,
Crumbled into the dust;
Low lies each stately pillar,
Food for consuming rust.
But the temple the mother builded
Will last while the ages roll,
For that beautiful unseen temple
Was a child's immortal soul."

Mothers have usually been good preachers. Some one has said: "The preaching that has cleansed the human heart, kept life wholesome and courageous, saved the world, has been the preaching all of us have received from the minds and lives of our mothers." There never was preaching like mother's, because there never was mind and heart like hers. She excelled in wisdom and she excelled in love. Her preaching was a magnificent expression of both. I can well imagine mother doing the preaching this morning. Ian MacLaren wrote a great story on the subject— "His Mother's Sermon." It is about a fine Scottish lad who gladdened the heart of his saintly mother by deciding to be a preacher. His mother died before he had finished his preparation, and on her death-bed her last counsel to him was

to be sure when he went into the pulpit to speak a good word for Jesus Christ. On this Mother's Day let us listen to mother's sermon to us all. I think I can hear her saying —

"I want you, my children, always to be polite. Speak when you are spoken to, take off your hat to your elders. Never take the biggest piece of cake, and don't interrupt when it is somebody else's turn to do the talking. Display good manners on all occasions, be considerate of other people, and always be thoughtful and kind. This advice is not only for to-day, but when you are taking your place in the world of men and affairs. The world needs a lot of discipline in good manners. Good manners will never allow you to be high-hatted because your father was a professor, or to feel superior because your forbears were United Empire Loyalists, or to be perfectly comfortable on your 3200 calories a day and all the luxuries thrown in, while two-thirds of the people of the world are living on diet that cannot properly sustain them, and under conditions that we should deplore.

It is bad manners to disregard the principles of social relationship. It is barbarian impoliteness to grab what others need and deserve. Perhaps we all will have to make fundamental revisions in our manner of living, in the future. We may have to give up our abundance in radios and planes and cars so that the rest of the world may have enough to eat, and a little cultural enrichment thrown in. We may have to renounce some of our unnecessary luxuries so that others may have a chance at the good things of life. It is really time that we stopped asking the question — '*What can I get out of this?*' and asked instead — '*What can I do for you?*' That's good manners for 1945.

Here is a good motto for everybody — '*All for one, and one for all.*' It will really work, whether in home, at school, or out in the great world of affairs. It has been the motto of General Mu-

gomery and of General Eisenhower. It is the team spirit that has won the war. It is the same motto for peace-making and peace-keeping too. We have had comradeship in arms and we must have partnership in peace. And better things will dawn on the horizons of the world.

Now you are going out to try this big world for yourselves. The time comes when every boy and girl must do that.

"The little road says go,
The little house says stay.
But oh, it's bonny here at home,
But I must go away."

And so you must. But you must go with a sense of direction. There is a right road to travel, a road where you can take your ideals along, where you can stand by the principles taught at home, and in Sunday School. Do not compromise, or shilly-shally. Have courage to stand for something. One may get through life without honor, but one cannot live without it. The people are broad-minded these days and tolerant about many offenders, but they will never tolerate the cheat or the hypocrite. They expect you to be worthy of their confidence. You can't build anything without that, and certainly not a great democratic civilization. It has been said most truly that '*An honorable character is the guardian genius of democracy.*' Personal character with a sense of social responsibility is the stuff out of which any great civilization is made. The war will be over, but there is a warfare without discharge—the struggle of truth against falsehood, of good-will against prejudice, of love against hate, of lasting brotherhood and peace against treachery and war. Enlist now, and carry on for the duration.

Life isn't just a sight-seeing trip. It has a great, holy purpose to be gripped and won." It is not for money-making or pleasure-seeking. It is splendidly worth-while because of what can be done. Every day may be a red-letter day for you because

of what it brings, and also what you may carry to others. It depends on your getting your life and life purposes in line with the best ideals and visions and purposes. Keep on the main line and don't get side-tracked by non-essentials.

You face a world that is disordered. It is full of distrust and hate and cruel selfishness, of broken ideals and moral confusion. Humanity is to be made over, a new world must be brought into being. You have already seen that bricks and stones do not make a home. Only the hearts of people can do that. That is also true in the great world about us. All the world turns homeward to-day with a great longing for a world where everybody will have a chance at life, a world with the lights of freedom and friendship flashing from all its windows, a world of honey hospitality for everybody, a world where the law of unselfish service, each for all and all for each, is put into universal practice, as it is in the ideal home. That is a big order, but that seems to be the certain call of God for this generation. And if that is within the will of God, then it can be achieved by His help.

And that leads me to this. As you go out into the great world of affairs be sure to make acquaintance with the Owner of it all. Make it the practice of your life to say every day — '*In Thee, O God, do I put my trust.*' Take your mother's faith to your heart. Put it into your business life. Let it be the background of your love life. Make it the very breath of your home and the food of your children. Whatsoever things are just and true and clean and honorable and Christlike, live for these things. Build them into your lives. Hold them fast, and you will have the peace of God too.

A number of years ago, in the city of Chicago, a little boy stood one day where the sunshine was streaming through the windows in such a fashion as to light up his new slippers with all the colors of the rainbow. Full of delight, he fairly shouted, — "Look, Mama, what is this?" She answered: "That

is God's smile, and I hope when you come to be a man you will always stand in God's smile.' The years passed by and the lad of yesterday was a man. He was a man of affairs, who had worked hard, planned well, made good, and won a real fortune. He was moving into a new palatial home in the city, and came to the task of opening the trunk where many treasured possessions were kept. The first object that arrested his attention was the pair of slippers he had worn when his mother had told him that the prismatic colors on his feet were God's smile. In her hand-writing she penned a little story of the incident and tucked it away with the slippers. The man of affairs read the note. '*I am afraid my William has gotten far away from God's smile. Pray God, he may return and stand in the smile of His redeeming love.*' He paused and meditated; '*Yes, far, far from God's smile.*' But he made the spiritual journey back and found his way again into the beautiful light of God's love. From that day he walked with Christ and radiated Christ's love from his own life.

My closing word to you is: Get under God's smile. Always live there. Some day every bit of life in this world will be a manifestation of His glory. How much that depends on you, my children."

PRAYER —

Kind Father of us all, bless all old mothers whom Thou hast made beautiful and sweet, whom some day Thou wilt translate to the world of eternal gladness; and young mothers whom Thou hast privileged to be the artists of the human race. May Thy grace be the lullaby which they sing into the souls of their children. Keep ever before us the Kingdom Thou wouldst build upon the earth through the children of the mothers of to-day.

In the Name of Thy Beloved Son. Amen.